

On page 21, line 8, decrease the amount by \$1,250,000,000.

On page 21, line 11, decrease the amount by \$1,250,000,000.

On page 21, line 12, decrease the amount by \$1,250,000,000.

On page 21, line 15, decrease the amount by \$1,250,000,000.

On page 21, line 16, decrease the amount by \$1,250,000,000.

On page 27, line 3, decrease the amount by \$29,625,000.

On page 27, line 4, decrease the amount by \$29,625,000.

On page 27, line 7, decrease the amount by \$90,125,000.

On page 27, line 8, decrease the amount by \$90,125,000.

On page 27, line 11, decrease the amount by \$153,250,000.

On page 27, line 12, decrease the amount by \$153,250,000.

On page 27, line 15, decrease the amount by \$219,500,000.

On page 27, line 16, decrease the amount by \$219,500,000.

On page 29, strike lines 14 through 19, and insert the following:

(a) SPENDING RECONCILIATION INSTRUCTIONS.—In the Senate, by May 16, 2006, the committees named in this section shall submit their recommendations to the Committee on the Budget of the Senate. After receiving those recommendations, the Committee on the Budget shall report to the Senate a reconciliation bill carrying out all such recommendations without any substantive revision.

(b) COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES.—The Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources shall report changes in laws within its jurisdiction sufficient to reduce budget authority and outlays by \$0 in fiscal year 2007, and \$3,000,000,000 for the period of fiscal years 2007 through 2011.

(c) COMMITTEE ON FINANCE.—The Senate Committee on Finance shall report changes in laws within its jurisdiction sufficient to reduce budget authority and outlays by \$0 in fiscal year 2007 and \$10,000,000,000 for the period of fiscal years 2007 through 2011.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I further ask unanimous consent that Senator GRAHAM of South Carolina be added as a cosponsor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, last year, Congress made some real progress in getting a handle on mandatory spending by passing the Deficit Reduction Act. The Deficit Reduction Act will reduce mandatory spending by nearly \$100 billion over the next decade, and it is the first time Congress has taken a hard look at how to find savings and reduce the budget deficit on the mandatory spending side since 1997.

The Deficit Reduction Act is a good first step. My amendment builds on the savings of the Deficit Reduction Act. My amendment lowers the Federal budget deficit, lowers the Federal debt, and does not increase taxes on the American people.

Today, the Federal budget, as we all know, is heavily weighted in favor of mandatory spending—entitlement spending, so to speak. As people live longer and the baby boom generation retires, that spending will increase and eat up a larger and larger share of our budget.

Just in Medicare and Medicaid alone, in the last 5 years, we have seen a 22-percent increase in entitlement spending for those two programs. And if we don't do something in the next 30 years about entitlement spending, we won't have a dime of revenue to pay for other items that are important, such as defense, education, NIH research, and payments to health care providers to reimbursement under Medicare and Medicaid.

My amendment directs the Senate Finance Committee to find \$10 billion in additional savings over the next 5 years. One proposal for the Finance Committee to consider under this amendment would be to repeal the stabilization fund included in the Medicare Modernization Act. Let me explain what that is.

This is essentially a bonus provision to preferred provider organizations—insurance companies, in other words—over and above the regular Medicare share to encourage them to participate in the Medicare Program. There simply is no reason to increase the Federal subsidy for these insurance companies over and above regular Medicare payments. We should eliminate that bonus and use that money, which is not necessary, to pay down the debt by \$7 billion.

There are other good areas I believe for the Finance Committee to find the \$10 billion this amendment would require. The problem is this: If we don't do something about the autopilot our budget is on when it comes to the mandatory side of spending, we have only ourselves to blame because no one is at the wheel, and I am afraid the plane will crash all too soon. We are feeling the squeeze already. The appropriators, I know, are trying to squeeze more and more out of the discretionary spending portion of the budget because as the mandatory and entitlement side rose, there was less and less flexibility for spending on important programs that represent America's priorities under the discretionary portion of the budget.

So I encourage my colleagues to support this amendment. It is one that can be done without detracting from current Medicare spending, but eliminates this bonus provision, this additional cash or Federal subsidy that is provided for under the law that could be saved and be put to more constructive use, showing that we are serious about fiscal responsibility and paying down the debt.

I yield back the remaining time.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I rise to support this amendment. I think it is an excellent idea and hopefully it will be successful. Stabilization money is certainly available. It is walking-around money. We don't need to have it sitting there, and we should use it for reducing the deficit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, this is a difficult matter for this Senator be-

cause I have proposed many times to my colleagues doing away with the stabilization fund. So this amendment puts me in a quandary to the extent that if we can assure that with this amendment we would eliminate the stabilization fund, I would be with the Senator.

The problem we face here is, No. 1, the stabilization fund is \$6.2 billion, it is not \$10 billion. No. 2, because of the way the budget resolution works, we cannot direct the Finance Committee on how to make the reduction. I wish we could, but we cannot.

What we would be doing, in effect, by the Senator's amendment is telling the Finance Committee to cut \$10 billion out of Medicare. They could do that in any number of ways without affecting the stabilization fund at all. In fact, colleagues may recall last year the Senate told the Finance Committee to take out the stabilization fund. I call it the slush fund. I think it is an absolute waste of money. I absolutely agree with the Senator on that point. But we all know at the end of the process, the stabilization fund was left intact because the way the budget process works, we give an instruction about how much finances to cut, but we cannot tell them how to do it.

So I want my colleagues to know that is the circumstance we face with this amendment. I thank the Senator for the good faith of his amendment.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I yield 5 minutes to the Senator from Louisiana.

AMENDMENT NO. 3025

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I rise in support of my filed amendment No. 3025. I will not formally call it up because some revisions to it are still being worked on in conjunction with my colleague from Louisiana, Senator LANDRIEU, and many other leaders in the Senate. But I will speak on this very important topic, and it has to do with meeting in a positive and responsible way our ongoing needs throughout all the coastal areas—not just Louisiana—for hurricane protection and other coastal needs.

Obviously, we have faced many challenges since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. This is a responsible way to help meet those needs and to help future coastal needs of all coastal States and to do it in a way that we can afford and that we can build into the budget. Rather than having to come back here every 2 months, every 3 months for additional appropriations, wouldn't it be far better to have a stable revenue source that can help us meet these needs directly? The biggest part of that stable revenue source is royalty share, getting our fair share of what we produce off our coasts in terms of offshore oil and gas.

This amendment is a first vital step in that direction because it would look to excess revenue, not anything built into the budget right now, but excess revenue in three areas to use for those vital purposes, not just for Louisiana